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MINISTRY OF TEXTILE INDUSTRY COMMENTS ON PRESENT CONDITIONS
AND FUTURE OPERATIONS OF TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN CHINA

Hsin-hua Yuesh-pao, No 51,
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[Comment: The following report summarizes a statement of the Ministry of Textile Industry, People's Republic of China, elaborating the ministry's directive "Regarding the Present Conditions and Future Tasks of the Textile Industry." The statement gives textile production figures, lists the shortcomings of the industry, and outlines the future role of state-operated enterprises in the development of the industry. It was originally published in the 23 December 1953 issue of the Peiping Jen-min Jih-pao.]

I. PRESENT CONDITIONS OF TEXTILE INDUSTRY

A. Production

The textile industry in China has shown remarkable progress during the past 4 years by implementing the central government's directives for the development of the textile industry. In 1952, the nation's textile industry reported impressive gains in all lines of production.

The production of cotton yarn in 1952 was 101 percent above that of 1949, and 51 percent above the figure for the highest production record of past years. The production of cotton cloth in 1952 was 130 percent above that of 1949, and 67 percent above the figure for the highest production record of past years. The production of jute bags in 1952 was 571 percent above that of 1949, and 87 percent above the figure for the highest production record of the past years. The production of home-processed silk in 1952 was 390 percent above that of 1949. There were also substantial increases in the production of woolen yarn, printing and dyeing, knit goods, and silk yarn.

During the past 2 years, the policy of the central government has been to develop the textile industry in inland districts in order to bring about an even development of the industry throughout the nation.

Paralleling the expansion of the state operated-textile industry, the privately operated textile industry has also increased 50.3 percent. In 1952, 1,266,000 bales of cotton yarn were produced by private industry, as against 842,000 bales in 1949.

B. State Participation

An outstanding feature in the rehabilitation of China's textile industry is the great increase in the share of capital invested by state-operated enterprises.

Since 1950, the government has implemented a system for the uniform allocation of raw materials (especially raw cotton) in the textile industry. There is also a system for allocating processing contracts to textile mills and one for the unified purchase of finished goods from all textile mills. This action has helped to stabilize the textile market, expedited the progress of state capitalism in industry, and has strengthened the position of leadership of state-operated enterprises in the textile industry.

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The textile industry in China, especially the cotton textile industry which constitutes 70 percent of the nation's textile industry, has already reached a high level of utilization of its industrial plants. This is because the proportion of textile production equipment to China's population is small. Except for the few areas where textile equipment is not yet fully utilized, state-operated textile enterprises throughout the nation have all adopted the three-shift system. It is reported that in 1953, the equipment utilization rate in the nation's textile industry has reached almost 95.4 percent.

C. Labor Conditions

There has been a substantial increase in the number of textile workers in the wake of the great expansion in the textile industry. In this connection, many improvements have also been made in the working and living conditions of the textile workers during the past 4 years.

Most of the state-operated enterprises have installed air coolers, dust removers, and safety appliances in their workshops. In addition to providing hospital and day-nursery facilities, these enterprises have also made adjustments in wages and working hours. This concern for the welfare of the workers has aroused them to greater enthusiasm for production.

D. Textile Equipment

By improving existing facilities in the textile industry for the repair and manufacture of textile equipment, it is now possible for China to manufacture a complete set of textile production machinery. In addition, China is now making experiments and drawing up plans for the manufacture of textile equipment for high-speed production. China is also training a highly competent staff of technicians so that hereafter, she can be self-sufficient in her textile machinery requirements.

E. Problems in the Industry

However, many shortcomings are still to be found in the textile industry. In the face of increasing demands for textile goods by the broad masses who are now enjoying a better standard of living, there is a basic shortage of equipment for textile production. In addition, this equipment is not evenly distributed all over the nation. Also, this equipment is not in proper proportion to the needs of the various steps in production, such as spinning, weaving, dyeing, and printing.

Another weakness is the poor quality of the textiles now being produced and their failure to meet the demands of the consumers. There is a high ratio of defective goods and the products lack variety and color.

Finally, the leadership of privately operated textile enterprises by state-operated enterprises is still weak and leaves much to be desired.

II. FUTURE ASSIGNMENTS OF STATE OPERATED TEXTILE INDUSTRY

A. Government Policy

Under the present policy of the central government, all state-operated textile enterprises must improve their management, raise their technical standards, and properly utilize their equipment, in order to bring about improvements in both the quality and quantity of output.

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In addition to the above steps to satisfy public demand, steps must also be taken to organize new textile mills in the centers of inland cotton-producing areas.

Finally, more capital must be accumulated for the expansion of state-operated textile enterprises in order to strengthen state leadership of the industry and to assure smooth progress by the nation toward a socialist economy.

B. Important Points in Planning

In making plans for future operations, it must be borne in mind that cloth is one of the basic needs of the broad masses. Unless there is a substantial increase soon in the number of machines for spinning and weaving cloth, there is a danger that there might be a serious shortage of this vital commodity.

However, a partial solution to this problem is the granting of a high priority for the construction of textile mills in the cotton-growing areas of the nation. In connection with this new construction, careful consideration must be given to the maintenance of a proper ratio between units constructed for spinning, weaving, and dyeing. This expansion program should also include new construction for the production of wool, silk, synthetic silk, and knit goods.

Although new mills will be going into production during the next 5 years, still, the nation's supply of cotton yarn and cloth must continue to come from the textile mills now in production. Therefore, although the existing plant and machinery of the nation's textile industry is obsolete and in disrepair, it is absolutely essential that these facilities be kept in continuous production by renovating and fully utilizing the plant and machinery and by introducing more effective management. This admonition is especially applicable to woolen, silk, and jute mills.

C. Improvements in Marketing

A serious limitation in the textile industry is its inability to satisfy the growing demand for textiles among the nation's masses who are now enjoying a higher standard of living. Because of the conditions then existing, every effort was made in the past to increase the quantity of production at the expense of quality and variety. But now, conditions are different and the textile industry must improve the quality of its output by reducing the amount of defective goods, by adopting better dyeing and printing techniques, and by producing a greater variety of goods. These improvements are especially needed in local state-operated enterprises and small privately operated enterprises which are filling government contracts for processing cloth.

The error made by cadres who produce goods which do not meet the demands of consumers is the result of their lack of attention to the likes and dislikes of consumers. Cadres have treated consumer demand as of concern only to the sales offices. This kind of erroneous thinking and lack of understanding is illustrated in the film "Dawn Over Moscow."

D. Improvements in Production

Hereafter, state-operated textile enterprises must improve their production by adopting the "Ho Chien-hsiu Method" and the "1951 Weaving Method" in addition to promoting the "1953 Textile Machinery Maintenance Method." At the same time, inspection of production and output must be intensified and enthusiasm engendered among the workers for high quality production and a reduction in the rate of thread breakage. Also, cadres must not disregard the tastes of consumers and must strive to improve their products by working more closely with the sales offices. However, in mapping plans to improve production, due consideration must be given to the principle of lowering production costs.

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E. Improvements in Working Conditions

Full consideration must be given to improvements in the working conditions at the mills by such action as the installation of cooling systems, safety appliances, and exhaust fans to remove dust and lint. In this connection, special attention should be given to the demands of women workers in the textile mills as they constitute 70 percent of the labor force of the entire textile industry and 50 percent of the workers in state-operated mills.

F. Improvements in Leadership

Another important assignment of state-operated textile enterprises is the need for them to strengthen their position of leadership over the entire textile industry. To maintain this position, the state continued to increase its capital investments in the textile industry during the past few years. It has also succeeded in bringing the production of all basic textile goods under government control.

Hereafter, the state-operated textile enterprises must lead and assist private textile enterprises by placing processing contracts with them in addition to helping them improve their production methods and teaching them to manage their mills properly. At the same time, steps should be taken systematically to expand the number of joint state and privately operated mills and to correct errors in the operation of privately operated mills.

While strengthening state leadership over private textile enterprises, full consideration must be given to the handicraft cloth weaving industry and the backward handicraft knitting industry. Incomplete reports show that there are 180,000 hand looms in the nation which annually produce over 20 million bolts of cloth, while the handicraft knit goods industry consumes 20 percent of the nation's total output of yarn.

These handicraft industries produce a multitudinous amount of goods and, in most cases, are backward in their operations. Therefore, it is necessary to show the utmost caution in dealing with them. In the case of the knit goods industry, small- and medium-sized enterprises should be encouraged to expand, while those engaged in minor handicrafts should be organized into producer cooperatives.

However, in the case of the handicraft cloth weaving industry, the workers must be prepared to change to other occupations or become unemployed. It can be assumed that the handicraft cloth weaving industry will naturally die out with the expansion of state-operated textile enterprises and modern urban textile enterprises.

G. Summary

Finally, in summarizing the weaknesses of the textile industry, it must again be pointed out that cadres must overcome their reluctance to study consumer demands and pay more attention to marketing conditions. The management of state-operated enterprises must also be greatly improved by the promotion of progressive experiences, by a show on the part of the cadres of greater enthusiasm for their work, by a more thorough understanding of the operational problems at lower levels on the part of administrators, and by a more general study of the directives issued by the central government. Only thus, can the existing chaos in the textile industry be remedied and the complete fulfillment of assignments be assured in the future.

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